NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

THE MILITARY IN THE POST-VIETNAM ERA: A SEARCH FOR RELEVANCE

by

Lawrence B. Wilkerson
Major, US Army

A paper submitted for the Admiral Richard G. Colbert Memorial Prize Essay Competition.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: Lawrence B. Wilkerson

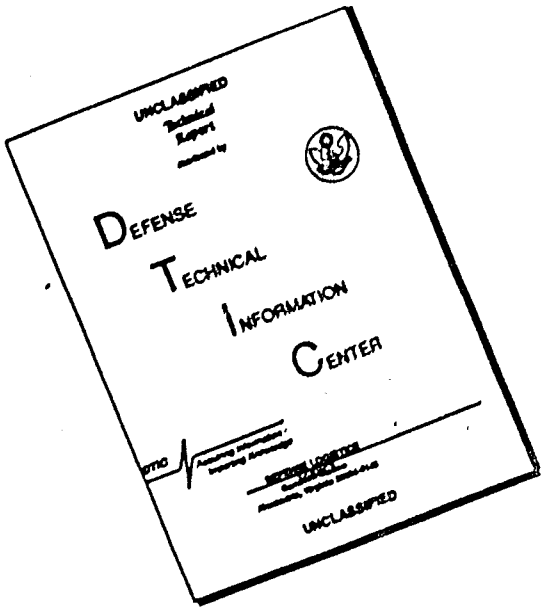
10 May 1982

Submitted through:

Col A. Lee Fuggett 7 MAY 82

Faculty Advisor Date

DISCLAIMER NOTICE



THIS DOCUMENT IS BEST QUALITY AVAILABLE. THE COPY FURNISHED TO DTIC CONTAINED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PAGES WHICH DO NOT REPRODUCE LEGIBLY.

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE	READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. AD-A122 702	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) The Military in the Post-Vietnam Era: A Search for Relevance.	5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED
	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Lawrence B. Wilkerson, MAJ, USA	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS President, Naval War College Newport, RI 02840	12. REPORT DATE 10 May 1982
	13. NUMBER OF PAGES 26
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED
	15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Distribution Unlimited.	
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)	
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) MILITARY FORCES (UNITED STATES) PUBLIC OPINION MORALE	

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

From April 1917 to September 1945, the American military establishment evolved into a contradiction in the American polity. After August 1945 the contradiction had become an aberration as well. It was an aberration because it possessed (though it did not know quite what to do with) a destructive apparatus that threatened the planned extinction of mankind, and it was a contradiction because it endeavored to perpetuate and indeed to secure the gap between American ideals and American political practice which it as an institution had come to represent. Ironically, it simultaneously became the instrument of force (OVER)

DD FORM 1 JAN 73 1473 EDITION OF 1 NOV 65 IS OBSOLETE

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

of the sole nation on earth capable of guaranteeing--with any degree of certitude--the protection and continuation of human freedom and dignity as both a creed and a way of life. How this difficult and paradoxical circumstance can be defined, analyzed, dealt with and accomodated within the American military establishment itself, is the subject of this brief work.

"And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Matthew Arnold

During World War II the American military establishment consummated an evolutionary process: it became a contradiction. It became so in much the same fashion as the ideas of equality and liberty are a contradiction: deeply, disturbingly, and disharmonically. Since that transition period—called by Russell Weigley the passage from "frontier constabulary" to "serious competitor of European armies long accustomed to international contests on a grand scale"—the military establishment has searched for a justification, a raison d'etre.[1] Thus far, it seems, the search has produced mixed results, the negative aspects accentuated and exacerbated by two "unwon" wars and—with vitiating currency—by the military's potential use in places as disparate as the areas of the Arabian littoral and El Salvador. The future portends a continued lack of any ultimate success. The impact such an agonizing endeavor promises to have on the nation with whose security this military establishment is charged—a nation barely two-hundred years old—could be immense.

Unlike Weigley's specialized and therefore limited approach suggests, the transition period marked much more than simply a passage from a frontier police force to a global instrument of power, and the period did not begin in 1941. It had firm roots in the Great War of 1914-18, or as many historians have come to accurately perceive it, in Act One of a two-act drama that had an extended intermission. From April 1917 to September 1945, the American mili-

tary establishment evolved into a contradiction in the American polity. After August 1945 the contradiction had become an aberration as well. It was an aberration because it possessed (though it did not know quite what to do with) a destructive apparatus that threatened the planned extinction of mankind, and it was a contradiction because it endeavored to perpetuate and indeed to secure the gap between American ideals and American political practice which it as an institution had come to represent. Ironically, it simultaneously became the instrument of force of the sole nation on earth capable of guaranteeing—with any degree of certitude—the protection and continuation of human freedom and dignity as both a creed and a way of life. How this difficult and paradoxical circumstance can be defined, analyzed, dealt with and accomodated within the American military establishment itself, is the subject of this brief work.

I

The evolution of human freedom and dignity was secured essentially by the peoples of Western Europe throughout the years of the so-called Pax Britannica—albeit the security apparatus was corrupted by colonialism, a narrow and self-serving interpretation and orchestration of trade, and the transition of England, the leading force, from a "nation of shopkeepers" to a nation inclined to service, audit, and act as banker for the labor forces and riches of other nations. Indeed, the pure white steed of Saint George was old, haggard, and specked with the dust of southern Africa by 1914; the machine guns, barbed wire and blood of No-Man's Land put to rest that equine symbol

of a more glorious past and all but the ghost of English world power expired along with it. Pax Britannica only needed Act Two of the drama to become Pax Americana. Yet even during Act One the Americans insured their eventual occupation of center place on the Western stage—no matter how reluctant most of them were, initially at least, to assume that perilous, lonely, and most un-American position. "By 1900," writes George Kennan, "we were generally aware that our power had world-wide significance and that we could be affected by events far afield; from that time on our interests were constantly involved in important ways with such events."[2] But it took several years before the American people would begin to grapple psychologically and therefore ideologically with this "world-wide significance," this "constant involvement," and this center stage position.

Almost immediately after consolidating that position—nolo contendere—in 1945, the challenge arose to test its permanence. Pax Americana was short-lived, quickly replaced by that phenomenon initiated in 1917 and belatedly recognized by the West in the 1950s—the Cold War. Such a challenge, finally blatant and obvious even to some of the most tenacious isolationists, restrained America's traditional retreat. In June 1950, on a small peninsula in East Asia known to oriental history as "The Land of the Morning Calm," America caught her feet in concrete and was fixed fast to the world arena--indeed, to center stage. No longer could the citizen-soldier grasp his musket, take refuge behind his stone fence, and pelt the enemy with righteous and holy—if not withering—fire. Now America's were the ordered ranks, the "red-coated" columns, the serried files that, world-wide, would press brass buttons into foreign soils in defense and expansion of the "White Man's Burden."

Yet there was a critical difference. This was not just a repetition of what some might call the inevitable and seemingly endless cycle of history. As Gunnar Myrdal observed, "Americans of all national origins, classes, regions, creeds, and colors, have something in common: a social ethos, a political creed."[3] In short, America was a nation unique in man's recorded knowledge: a people capable of national moral passion, or as Hofstadter phrased it, a nation whose fate was "not to have ideologies but to be one."[4]

Americans viewed their "burden" very differently from their English predecessors--a reflection of both their political heritage and their innately paradoxical outlook, both governed by the American consensus on the values--the ideas--for which they had taken up arms in 1776. As Professor Huntington aptly describes it, "the political ideas of the American Creed have been the basis of national identity."[5] Thus, the "burden" was a true moral responsibility, not so much akin to proselytization—though frequently perceived and vigorously analyzed and reported as such--but to the genuine "social ethos" now translated, to some degree by compulsion, into an international framework. Americans had formed "a more perfect union," recognized "certain unalienable rights," and, "with a decent respect to the opinions of mankind," had pointed out "self-evident truths." After World War II the only significant change seemed to be that providing for "the common defense" might require some additional effort and sacrifice. John Quincy Adams had succinctly defined the traditional policy: "We are the friends of liberty everywhere, the custodians only of our own." After World War II, custodianship of the liberty of the Free World changed all that. Only slowly and painfully--and in most cases only vaguely—have Americans come to realize both the nature of the political contradiction such a course

of action represents, and the ideological aberration entailed by maintaining the means to fulfill it. America's military professionals have been perhaps the slowest of all.

Many argue that the American military establishment was ideologically corrupted prior to the historical startpoint assumed here. Some simply point to the Indian Wars and go no further. They view the campaigns against these early American peoples by a frontier Army as virtual slaughters, heinous crimes against humanity—in essence, as a series of military-sponsored pogroms. Most such individuals do not realize that the so-called Indian Wars encompass almost all of America's early national history (indeed, date back almost 200 years prior to the beginning of that history) starting with the campaigns against the Northwest Indians in the 1790s and, in most formal accounts, ending with the Chippewa disturbances in 1898. Informal accounts (especially those kept by Indians) might credit the "wars" as having never ended at all, as continuing even today. But these travails, like the American dilemma over slavery—truly an ideological contradiction--were more internal problems, grievous nonetheless, but requiring a condemnation, if one is warranted, of both the American people and polity.

Other people assert that wars against Mexico to insure the borders of Texas and the acquisition of the New Mexico and California Territories, against Spain to acquire the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico and to occupy Cuba, presaged a national yearn for preeminence and a disregard for founding principles. They view the military establishment as willing—even eager—accomplice in such imperial enterprises and their ease wins. Seventy-five thousand American troops suppressing the Philippine Insurrection at the cen-

tury's turn, Marines landing in Nicaragua in May 1910, and Brigadier Pershing pushing 350 miles into Mexico in 1916, all are cited to buttress such arguments.

Neither of these views substantiates an ideologically corrupt military. Those who argue in this vein forget much, not the least of which is that it is a fundamental tenet of American politics that in the civil-military relationship, the "civil" predominates. Simply put, the military establishment may indeed have contradicted founding principles—at Bear Paw Mountain with the Nez Perce, at Wounded Knee Creek with the Sioux, and at Bluefields with the Nicaraguans, for examples—; however, such events were executions of national policy not internalized contradictions. They were executive not institutional contradictions. Such events did not, in short, institutionalize a gap between American principles and practice. Nor did the Winchester Repeater rifle—contrary to many an Indian's thoughts at least—represent an apparatus for the planned destruction of mankind. No serious person wrote of those rifles, as one author has written of nuclear weapons, that "they were made by men, yet they threaten to annhilate man."[6]

It is possible, however, to concede certain points in such arguments as those above--particularly regarding the earlier "seeding" of the institutionalization of the gap between principle and practice, and the potential of Total War, i.e., as realized in World War I, to precede nuclear weapons in the role of spectacular ideological aberrations that contained the programmed means for man's destruction. But the frame of reference one must possess, it seems, to bring comprehension to such an analysis as proposed here and to recognize the pernicious and pervasive contradiction that currently exists, to

acknowledge and seek to understand the full nature of the aberration, requires the facts of the Twentieth Century. More specifically for Americans, it requires the additional two to three generations of "cosmopolitan Americanism," the effects of two world wars and two ambiguous "limited" wars, and a modern "creedal passion period," i.e., the 1960s and 70s. More critically for Americans, it requires they recognize (or at least feel some preconscious urgings to recognize): (1) the extraordinary intricacy of world economic interdependence, (2) the slowly opening door of not the Final Frontier but the Endless Frontier—that is of course Outer Space—and the wealth of knowledge accompanying that opening, (3) the fervent awakening in the Third World of revolutionary nationalism, (4) the increasing obsolescence of traditional methods, and (5) the fact that, as Andrei Sakharov has written, "it is the supermilitarism of the Soviet Union that necessitates high military expenditures throughout the world."[7] It requires also that significant numbers of Americans recognize the truth in the words of China's brilliant critic of revolution, Lu Hsün, that "if you demand political rights you will not meet with much opposition, whereas if you speak about the equal distribution of wealth you will probably find yourself up against enemies, and this of course will lead to bitter fighting."[8] And lastly, such a frame of reference to be analytically useful demands that in the "bitter fighting" one choose sides. In such an environment, institutionalized contradictions and ideological aberrations assume far greater significance, especially when one recalls the nature of the American Creed. For the American military establishment such an environment can stifle life. Recalling what was said earlier about America's role as the "sole guarantor" of human

freedom and dignity, it is logical to conclude that enervation of the American military establishment implies far more than that phrase might traditionally suggest. In fact, it implies a national danger of the first degree.

II

In "The State and Revolution," V.I. Lenin wrote: "Today in 1917...England and America, the biggest and last representatives of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty'—in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy—have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions...."[9] From a Western perspective one could never go far wrong in accusing Lenin of hyperbole and distortion; however, there is a kernel of insight in this description of America. Such "kernels" were available to most Americans (though rarely acutely perceived) after 1945, perhaps muddled somewhat in the 1950s, and then brought directly and painfully into the public domain during and after the Vietnam War.

Lenin also wrote that "the bureaucracy and the standing army are a 'parasite' on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society...."[10] The idea of the standing army as a "parasite" would have appealed, one surmises, to certain of America's founding fathers. (Indeed, Lenin often suffers his most excruciating moments while painstakingly differentiating the "liberal" ideas of the Enlightenment and the "scientific socialist" ideas of Marxism.) However, within the American political experience, such a "parasite" thrived not on class conflict but on entangling alliances, intensive international involvement beyond the dictates of free trade, intervention in the affairs of others, and a disregard for the principles of the Constitution—primarily a document designed to "insure domestic tranquility"—and the Declaration of Independence--primarily a sanctification of the "revolutionary" American withdrawal from the "all-European filthy, bloody morass...."

In short, a "standing army" is a contradiction of American principles, both in and of itself—i.e., as an institution with political purpose—and in the sense that its permanent and public maintenance symbolizes its "parasitic" existence and implies its use (and that "use" of course entails further contradictions). In other words, the military establishment has become not only a political instrument capable of violating American values, it is a violation of those values.

Americans use armies to defend themselves—in passionate fits of "high moral passion," as Kennan phrases it. Even when they do become involved with the international deployment of armies, Americans do so only "to make the world safe for democracy," or to avenge a "day of infamy." Americans do not wage war—use armies—for raisons d'etat, not with great success at any rate, and not without grievous consequences to the stability and health of the Creed, i.e., that set of values which is America, as Hofstadter implied. Here again, Americans come closer in their thinking about armies and war to Marx's idea of the "armed proletariat" seeking rightful justice in an oppressive but historically pre-determined world, than they do to the European idea of maintaining and using armies for reasons of state. Strange as it may at first seem, the uniformed and armed American is more classless in his orientation than the armed soldier of the proletariat masses. Thus, his passion and sense of high moral principle is extremely significant—when he is thoroughly and, as he perceives it, properly aroused. Certainly neither Marx, Lenin, nor Mao could have ever comprehended this; nevertheless, it is demonstrably so. One has only to spend time in a foxhole, under fire, with this American warrior to grasp this idea. But such is the case only when

he is, as indicated, properly aroused—that is to say in a way coinciding with the Creed and not deviating from nor contradicting it.

The same American warrior is not simply lethargic, as one might say a Hessian mercenary of the 1780s was lethargic, when he is presented with an amoral (or immoral) situation wherein he is called upon to fight and to kill others. He is recalcitrant and rebellious and can—from the highest to the lowest intellectual and organizational levels—become dangerous to the military and political effort. At the lower levels he can declare "conscientious objector" status, "move to Canada," desert, take refuge in drugs and alcohol, or "frag" leaders who represent the authority whom, perhaps subconsciously, he blames for the lack of moral passion and the consequent lack of validity in his situation. At the higher levels he can rationalize failures, persist in strategies he knows are ineffective, and--most notably and in general—misuse his power.

This last issue, the misuse of power—or more pervasively the idea of power itself as physically embodied by military forces—significantly amplifies the antipathy Americans feel for the standing military force. Americans are traditionally anti-power: "In the United States...awareness of power induces suspicion, hostility, and outrage."[11] And power need not be misused to engender moral passion against the "powerful" person or institution, rather it need only be embodied or perceived to be so.

In recent years there have been several attempts—mostly cosmetic and therefore ineffective—to relieve this situation. The design of military uniforms to be more civilianized (culminating recently with the Army's light green dress shirt on which no identi-

fying insignia, awards, etc., may be worn), reminiscent of Mao's attempts to "derank" the Chinese military, is such an attempt. Another is the close affiliation of the military establishment with civilian firms and corporations—and not just the so-called munitions-makers—exemplified by the "corporate member" status within military professional associations and organizations. Contrast this with the early 1900s (or with a period as late as the 1930s) when a soldier or sailor took his life in his hands if he dared to enter even a civilian tavern. Use of "Madison Avenue" sales and advertising techniques and the almost pathetic adoption by many elements of the military establishment of civilian management techniques and jargon, are two other such attempts. But it is difficult to hide or to successfully camouflage several millions of uniformed men and women. And the traditional method of making the bulk of them engineers, dam-builders and construction workers and using them to do "good works" throughout America (as was done in Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century America and, again, as Mao did in China) cannot possibly work today. Neither is there a a frontier on which to hide them, though this may again become an option as the Universe unfolds and becomes more accessible to man.

The ideas behind such attempts at camouflage explain, in part at least, American opposition to the "Draft." National conscription represents in a single, comprehensible—and therefore instantly and pervasively reprehensible—process the "standing army." Thus, Americans seek volunteer armies and navies to assuage the feeling of evil, to ameliorate the contradiction of basic values, to hide the reality—at least in political concept—of millions of armed men and women and the power such an aggregation represents. It is

far easier to reconcile the cry of "mercenary" with the Creed than the spectre of massive and latent power.

III

Dwight Eisenhower dealt with the ideological dilemma just discussed, in part at least, by substituting what seemed to be the latest technological development in major war-fighting capabilities for the increased fiscal and ideological expense of maintaining a large conventional military establishment. In short, he opted for atomic weapons: the new aberration in the American Creed. One might say that in doing so the President left the warm but still tolerable "frying pan" for the crackling and transmogrifying (to use William Faulkner's apt description) fire. But it took some time to burn.

The anti-nuclear movement sweeping America—indeed, much of the Western World—is a passionate manifestation of a highly rationalistic perspective: why should man want to destroy himself?[12] Put in an American perspective, how has the nation transitioned from that blissful day in June 1952 when "thousands of holiday tourists... jammed Las Vegas...to watch the dawn [atomic] flash in the sky..." to the thousands of Americans who militantly oppose even the nuclear-powered utilities industry in the United States, an industry with perhaps one of the best industrial safety records in history?[13] Is it overly simplistic to say it is because the uncertainty has grown rather than diminished; has multiplied out of all proportion the possible losses that could accrue? "How should we respond to the unique new nuclear peril?" asks columnist Richard Strout—

> The answer is—nobody knows. The rational course is to learn the facts (so far as we are able) and not to grow hysterical. It fits into the zone of uncertainty, too, that to reflect that even while we meditate a few more warheads are added to the world arsenal, each capable of blotting out a city. Fairly soon, probably, the bomb will not be confined just to a few major powers but will be available to other lands.[14]

Again, putting the argument in the specific context of the American experience, one might subscribe to the idea of "better dead than Red," but this very subscription negates one's transitioning to "better a dead planet, than the enslavement of man." After all, slavery can be broken: history is replete with chains, locked and broken. But the death of man, that is altogether a different affair. One could argue with some eloquence—and deviate from no central American value—that no high moral principle is higher than that of ultimate responsibility for planetary life or death. Such an argument does require an *interpretation* of central American values because no framer of those values contemplated planetary death. But one finds, it seems, upon close analysis such an argument falls quite in step with the thrust of the Creed.

"The unleashed power of the atom," said Einstein, "has changed everything except our way of thinking." After almost four decades, perhaps "our way of thinking" is beginning to change. It is highly appropriate, therefore, to say that the transition from curiosity to complacency to moral passion has occurred because Americans are awakening to the aberration of the Creed that nuclear weapons represent.[15] And as the guardians and principle users of those weapons, the military establishment, by mere association, stands once again accused. Today, tomorrow, and in the foreseeable future, one envisions the military establishment becoming more and more an object of American moral passion.

Yet the paradox cannot be simply wished away; nor can rational thought processes vaporize or even weaken it (though some truly valiant efforts have been made by American intellectuals). As Sakharov has vividly pointed out—from perhaps the most realistic vantage point of all—one cannot provide for "the defense of ethical and democratic values throughout the world..." without a standing force, and that force must possess adequate means for such a defense.[16] "Adequate means" translated vis-à-vis the potential threat in the world equates to an extensive stockpile of nuclear arms.

In sum, the American military establishment institutionalizes the gap between American values (non-intervention, anti-alliance, self-determination, and anti-power) and American practice (Vietnam, NATO, El Salvador, and the "military-industrial complex," to cite just a few examples). Such an institutionalization promises military ineffectiveness in a world which more and more demands military effectiveness. Furthermore, nuclear weapons—and recently a reinvigorated national policy of possible first-use of those weapons—increase incalculably the dimensions of this ideological dilemma.[17]

IV

It has been argued that the military establishment of the United States, now "standing" at about 2.1 million persons, is a contradiction of basic American values. It has been further argued that the major strategic and tactical weapons systems of that military establishment are an aberration of those values. Simultaneously it has been maintained that the evolution of human freedom and dignity has perhaps never been in such peril as today and that the burden of in-

suring that evolution into the Twenty-first Century and beyond rests, in part, upon the establishment whose basic contradiction and creedal aberration have just been described and reiterated.

The tendency at this point is to plunge into a series of alternative solutions of national dimensions, i.e., to propose, discuss, and prescribe new courses of action pertaining to the way the nation of America does business. But, as avowed at the outset, this is not the purpose of this brief work. The question here is: how should the American military establishment handle this dilemma? In microcosm, the issue is simply: how can the military professional find the rationale for his duty, the reason for his existence, within such a negatively-charged institutional environment?

It is certainly true that for the American military professional there is an enemy to consider. Further, the enemy appears to be resolute, capable (lately perhaps more capable in certain key areas than America) and, by some credible authorities, thought to be aggressive. Even if one does not agree with China's Huan Xiang that "Soviet social-imperialism is pushing a hegemonist policy of aggression and expansion...right at the United States...", it is still difficult to explain the unprecedented Soviet military build-up, a build-up that continues apace at this writing.[18] Is this not sufficient answer to the military professional's question? Clearly it is not—unless Soviet soldiers, missiles, or bombs, or other such force, are delivered onto American territory. Only then is there a relatively clear prerogative. Only then does the Creed offer inviolable answers. All else, it seems, is in the so-called gray area.

Concerning the use of nuclear weapons, there is probably no

American military professional who in his heart of hearts does not regard their use—in any fashion—as bordering on if not constituting insanity. And yet most American military professionals understand the significance of John Keegan's words that, while "war is an activity that modern Western man prefers to banish to the remotest corner of his consciousness..., the fact of war his reason cannot deny." War, "however repugnant to all that is sensitive and generous in human nature, is nevertheless universal in the life of mankind."[19] And so the American military professional endures.

This same military professional was called upon to track down and kill Indians when often his hatred for the white settler exceeded any animosity he held toward the Indian—in fact, in many instances his diaries and memoirs, where available, display an amazing empathy for his formidable but doomed adversary. This same professional was called upon to manage and oversee a mixed, disease-ridden, poor and extremely unsophisticated society in Cuba, and faired rather well in the doing. He was called upon to stem the hordes pouring into South Korea—and to stop their tanks with anti-tank weapons that fired projectiles so ineffective that when they struck a North Korean tank they often failed to alert the crew within that they had been engaged. And he was called upon to simultaneously fight a vicious guerrilla war and build a government in a country where "government" was a malicious concept and guerrillas were a tradition. But he endured. Given the new contradictions of which he is becoming slowly aware, how long can he continue to do so? More importantly, in what ways will he do so?

It seems that within the American military establishment four "ways" stand out as important. For simplicity, one can call them

options:

- The Spartan Option
- The Citizen-Soldier Option
- The Organizational Option
- The Cognitive Option

General descriptions of each option are as follows:

Spartan: In a more modern context, one might refer to this option as the "Prussian Option." Here the military professional closes his mental processes to all thought and speculation beyond the tactical, technical, and military strategic demands of his profession. The hectic and frequently crisis-oriented day-to-day management exercised in most military organizations assists this "mental closure" immeasurably—almost as if this frenetic activity were medicinal. In short, the military professional though surrounded by Helots continues to ignore them in his concentration on (and perfection of techniques to defeat) the external enemy.

Citizen-Soldier: This option is sometimes referred to as the "Cincinnatus Option." Here the military professional, after his commitment elapses, leaves the service and "returns to the farm." The "farm" is usually the civilian business world where high salaries and a more disciplined management environment assuage the lack of altruistic service. This option can be implemented early or late in a professional's career—usually in the form of a refusal to reenlist, resignation, or early retirement.

Organizational: This option is a product of the modern phenomenon—often called the chief product of the Twentieth Century—known as bureaucracy. Here the military professional simply prays that America's enemies are as confused as America (a highly intellectual

rationalization); he counts on a "no-war" future; he wishes only to perpetuate and remain loyal to the bureaucratic organization known as the Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps. He is especially attracted to the Druckerisms, Kotterisms, Mazlowisms, ad infinitum, that supposedly keep bankers, bakers, and businessmen prosperous. He is particularly vulnerable, as Senator Hart summarizes it, to that "narrow focus" which "leads him to believe that the success of his small group within the organization is more important than the goals of the organization as a whole."[20] This narrow focus becomes his "medicinal" element.

Cognitive: This option could be called the Realist Option, or perhaps more appropriately, the Traditional American Option. Here the military professional constantly carries the paradoxes with him, as a sort of mental baggage train. He is almost daily making decisions, larger or smaller, based on the interplay of the mentally encapsulated paradoxes. He rarely rationalizes—in the pejorative sense—he rather realizes contradictions, senses aberrations, and constantly measures his actions against both ideal and real standards derived from the Creed. He is, for instance, the most likely to plead early insanity as his labors to close the gap become more and more onerous; however, such a plea is never registered, or only rarely so. If he stays at the process indefinitely and is particularly intent (as one perceives, for example, Creighton Abrams to have been) the constant exercise of this option can kill him.

Of course, these are general descriptive categories. A military professional does not simply dive into one or the other category and immerse himself in its dimensions for the remainder of his career or life. He might pursue in the main the cognitive option

and yet adopt one or more of the other three at any given juncture or decision-point in his career. He could, for example, decide that the institutional contradiction was becoming too pronounced for him to handle and immediately choose the "Cincinnatus Option." Sudden commitment of American ground forces in El Salvador might, for instance, cause an Army or Marine Corps professional to leave his Service, or seek transfer to other non-involved sections of his organization. In essence he is saying: "Call me if the Russians invade West Germany or Norway but I'm not going to Chalatenango and shoot 'rebels.'" Or, faced with such an exacerbation of the gap between practice and principle, he might elect the Spartan option in order to tolerate the experience and use the loyalty implications of the organizational option to assuage the transition from one option to the other. The difficulty here, of course, arises when such an individual attempts to reverse the process: once the Spartan or organizational option is adopted it is extremely difficult to readopt the cognitive option, no matter how thoroughly one assures oneself that return will be effected as soon as the contradiction somewhat subsides. It is a little like the problem Liddell Hart describes for the British officer who, after arriving at the rank-level he has been desirous of all his career, suddenly discovers that there is no "zip" left.

On a somewhat more serious level—in terms of the military organization and the effects of new options—a military professional practicing the cognitive approach might move right up to a major option shift quite abruptly and quite without precedent. Here the effects of his transition could be awesome. Consider, for example, the commander of a nuclear ballistic missile submarine. First, he

receives a directive from the appropriate command authority to move into his designated missile launch area; next, he receives a communication in terse military format that indicates a Soviet attack on NATO forces is in progress; and some fretful hours later he receives a third communication—properly tested and found to be authentic—ordering him to launch missiles. Does he transition at this point? Does he launch? One wants to say (or does one?) that of course he launches: "c'est la vie militaire." But, as has been indicated, it is not so simple.

On a less serious level—yet no less a dilemma on an individual basis—consider the infantryman faced with the situation of killing a twelve-year old boy because the boy is in a "Free Fire Zone" and the standing order is to kill all males in that area. For the sake of argument, say the soldier exercises the cognitive option with results that he allows the boy to pass unharmed. A few moments later the boy appears again and hurls a grenade into the soldier's patrol and kills or wounds several fellow soldiers. What thoughts will the soldier have now? Will he continue to pursue the cognitive option? or will he transition to the Spartan option? It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty. It is even more difficult to predict, if he does transition for a time, whether he will eventually be able to return.

One does not have to go into actual combat to create hypothetical situations. The General or Admiral testifying before Congress as to the preeminence of his Service's weapons program--when deep inside the General's mind is the unblemished knowledge that a sister service's program is better—is one such peacetime example. Blind advocacy of increased military spending is another; and the list could go on and on.

It should be clear that no nation intent on its security in an extremely dangerous world would want a military organization composed exclusively of members exercising the organizational option. And a nation would, of course, have no meaningful military organization if all its members exercised the "Cincinnatus Option" (a situation, however, traditionally in harmony with certain basic American values). It should be equally clear that regarding the effectiveness of a military organization—i.e., measured in pure military terms—the Spartan option is best. It should be equally clear also that such an option, adopted by all or a majority of a military organization's members, would equate to tremendous and largely amoral power and would, therefore, be totally unacceptable to and indeed quite dangerous for the unique nation that is America.

And so this essay has come full circle. The American military professional has no choice if America—the America which is structured and sparked by the Creed—is to survive. America's warriors, it seems, must relentlessly pursue the cognitive option and yet adopt the Spartan when severe circumstances dictate—and then, most importantly, be able to revert. They must, as one of America's finest soldiers once said, realize that "true patriotism sometimes requires of men to act exactly contrary, at one period, to that which it does at another, and the motive which impels them—the desire to do right—is precisely the same."[21] One could say that for Americans, "to do right" and the Creed are one and the same.

The agonizing question becomes: Is this happening in the American military establishment? Are the professionals pursuing the cognitive option? And are they developing the intellectual skills and vigor necessary for transitions—forward and back? It is a very

large question and with its posing this brief analysis concludes. Each and every member of the American military establishment will have to answer this question for himself. In the process and direction of their answers lies the most effective military force for America—and the most certain guarantee of human freedom and dignity. There also, however, reposes the potential for unparallelled disaster—global as well as national.

NOTES

1. Russell F. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. xv.

2. George F. Kennan, "Moralism-Legalism," Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, Volume II: Since 1914 (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1978), p. 13.

3. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 3. Myrdal concluded (same page) that "it is difficult to avoid the judgement that the 'American Creed' is the cement in the structure of this great and disparate nation."

4. Richard Hofstadter, quoted in Hans Kohn, American Nationalism: An Interpretative Essay (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1957), p. 13.

5. Samuel P. Huntington, American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1981), p. 23.

6. Jonathan Schell, The Fate of the Earth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 1.

7. Andrei Sakharov, My Country and the World (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 48.

8. Lu Hsün, quoted in Jonathan D. Spence, The Gate of Heavenly Peace (New York: The Viking Press, 1981), p. 217.

9. V.I. Lenin, "State and Revolution," Arthur P. Mendel, ed., Essential Works of Marxism (New York: Bantam Books, 1979 edition), p. 130.

10. Ibid.,p. 122.

11. Huntington, p. 78.

12. As of April 1982, the "nuclear freeze" movement, for example, had been officially endorsed by the Massachusetts and Oregon legislatures and efforts were underway in twenty other states to take this "issue" to the ballot box. Another such example, fairly well described in The Atlantic (February 1982, p. 6) by Peter H. Stone, involves American physicians grouped into an activist anti-nuclear front called the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). Also see Mark Garrison, "Nuclear Freeze: Dollars and Sense," Christian Science Monitor, 29 March 1982, p. 23:2. There are, of course, numerous other examples appearing almost daily in the press and periodicals of America.

13. "Atom 'Gun' Fired and G.I.'s 'Charge'," The New York Times, 2 June 1952, Sec L, p. 9:4.

14. Richard L. Strout, "Thinking About the Unthinkable—1982," The Christian Science Monitor, 2 April 1982, p. 23:4.

15. It could be argued, of course, that Americans are awakening because for the first time in their nation's history they have come to realize their mortality. In other words, Americans are finally realizing the real potential for their own destruction—something the Soviets have lived with certainly since 1945 (many would argue long before that) and that they—the Soviets—have only succeeded in making the Americans "live with" in the last few years. While this is a persuasive argument, I find it a bit too cynical. However, as Richard Hofstadter describes the phenomenon in general, it becomes more credible and palatable: "Much of America still longs for—indeed, expects again to see—a return of the older individualism and the older isolation, and grows frantic when it finds that even our conservative leaders are unable to restore such conditions. In truth we may well sympathize with the Populists and with those who have shared their need to believe that somewhere in the American past there was a golden age whose life was far better than our own. But actually to live in that world, actually to enjoy its cherished promise and its imagined innocence, is no longer within our power." Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 328.

16. Sakharov, p. 17.

17. For a recent high-level attack on this re-articulation of the "first-use" strategy, see McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara, and Gerard Smith, "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1982, p. 753.

18. Huan Xiang, "On Sino-U.S. Relations," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1981, p. 35.

19. John Keegan and Joseph Darracott, The Nature of War (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p. IX and XI.

20. Senator Gary Hart, "What's Wrong With the Military?", The New York Times Magazine, 14 February 1982, p. 45.

21. Robert E. Lee, quoted in Charles Bracelen Flood, Lee: The Last Years (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981), p. 102. Perhaps there are better examples of the exercise of the cognitive option by great warriors, but this particular one certainly rates serious attention. Ironically—in the context of the present essay—Lee was a private man at this time who was engaged in what was to him a vital but a fruitless process during the rest of his lifetime: becoming a citizen of the United States of America.